

FIGHTING WYCOMBE OUST NORTHERNERS IN CUP THRILLER

By "NOVA"

Wycombe Wanderers, 4; Whitley Bay, 2

FOUR moments of artistry and ice-cool skill, amid the white-hot heat of a typically rugged, pulsating Amateur Cup second round battle, sent most of the 6,000-strong Loakes Park crowd home happy on Saturday, and put Wycombe another step forward on the Wembley trail.

In those four breath-taking moments the Wycombe forwards displayed some individual magic to shatter a gallant Whitley Bay defence and open up a path which led to two goals in each half.

In a see-saw game which throbbed with excitement from the start, it was fitting that such goals should have decided the tie.

For fans who had been expecting thrills this was no disappointment. Apart from the brilliant goals there were some fantastic misses—notably by Whitley Bay—some hard luck, when shots thudded against the woodwork, and much fierce and deadly tackling. Every ingredient was liberally mixed. The result was an explosive clash.

FIGHTING SPIRIT

Whitley Bay came to Wycombe with a reputation for toughness. But the Wanderers more than matched their opponents every inch of the way for power and strength, and at the vital period just after half-time, with the scores standing level at 2-2, they pulled out that little extra ounce of skill and stamina which forced the iron men from the North to accept defeat.

It was this fighting spirit of Wycombe which was the main difference between the two sides. After conceding the two second half goals almost all the Whitley Bay players seemed to accept defeat.

Within five minutes of the start tearaway centre-forward Billy Wright whipped in a goal under the nose of Syrett. This completely unsettled the Wycombe keeper, who for the rest of the half made a series of slips which could well have cost Wycombe the game. Had Whitley Bay made the most of their early superiority, they would have marched on.

But it's goals that count, as Wycombe showed in their first attack, after eight minutes. Hodges, receiving from Pullin, raced away down the touchline. In a fantastic burst of speed he beat two defenders before giving Lowen, who led the line quietly but skilfully, a simple chance which he accepted

yard run. He crashed in a glorious drive which cracked against the post and was cleared.

Two minutes later Hodges and Lowen repeated their first goal move, and Wycombe were two up and almost home. Despair showed in the Whitley Bay play as Wycombe slowed up the pace to suit themselves. Tempers, which had been running high all afternoon, became more than a little frayed and after another clash with Wright, Roystone was "booked".

In a final all-out onslaught from the visitors, with only Pullin guarding the net, neither Cain or Wright could do better than balloon the ball over the bar. With this the Bay attacks subsided and in the last minutes it was Wycombe who were doing the forcing and Horseman almost added a fifth.

The greater individual skill of Hodges, Worley, Horseman and Beck, the cool play of Pullin, Lewis and Lowen, and the toughness of Roystone, Maharg and Balson were just too much for the gallant Northerners.

Wycombe.—D. Syrett; J. Beck, G. Pullin; G. Maharg, P. Roystone, A. Lewis; L. Worley, T. Horseman, P. Lowen, J. Balson, P. Hodges.

Whitley Bay.—R. Coates; J. Twaddle, N. Hetherington; N. Walton, B. Oakley, G. Ramshaw; J. Elliott, R. Cain, B. Wright, K. Sloan, R. Gidney.

NARROW ESCAPES

This goal, rather against the run of play, only made Whitley even more determined and the Wycombe defence had their work cut out trying to shield a nervous Syrett. And there were several close shaves.

Wright, who had a tremendous duel with Roystone, hit a post and a Walton shot which rebounded off Syrett's chest was blasted over the top by Cain, who was otherwise well held by Lewis.

Although Whitley Bay did most of the attacking, whenever Wycombe did escape they always seemed dangerous, and after 39 minutes they proved this by scoring another individualist goal. Worley made a good run on the right before passing to Horseman, who jinked past three defenders and smashed the ball home.

Whitley Bay should have been level the next minute, when Wright burst through, but three minutes before the interval the centre-forward got the well-deserved equaliser after fine play by Walton.

GOAL OF THE MATCH

The stage was now set for a tremendous second half, with the odds stacked slightly in the visitor's favour, for they were looking the stronger and more aggressive side.

But within ten minutes Wycombe's greater individual ability pulled them through again—when Worley scored the goal of the match with a cracking left-foot drive after cutting inside. Then came the really decisive minutes.

Right from the restart Wycombe were given a free-kick and from it Lowen's header hit a post. The ball was quickly transferred upfield to Walton, who set off on an amazing 50-